

Admiral Raborn Tells Polaris Story

A Capital Interview

By Courtney Sheldon

WASHINGTON

Admiral William F. Raborn oversees the development of one of the nation's most promising retaliatory weapons—the submarine-launched Polaris missile. In his opinion:

- "Upwards of 50 (Polaris submarines) would be a most significant force, bearing in mind that we don't have to be able to clobber every military target in order to have a good deterrent."
- "Mobility and using the hidden depths of the sea make the Polaris submarine almost invulnerable."

This is how Admiral Raborn told the Polaris story in an interview with this correspondent:

What are the great advantages of the Polaris as a war deterrent weapon, Admiral?

With an effective deterrent system we would have the ability and the time to retaliate in case of overt action against this country. If a prospective enemy felt he could zero in (pinpoint as a target) the positions where our retaliatory capability is located, he might be misled into taking a calculated risk and try to wipe out our positions in a surprise blow.

This is one of the reasons why mobile systems—such as Polaris—are so well thought of. Mobility and using the hidden depths of the sea make the Polaris submarine almost invulnerable. Certainly, if an enemy can't zero in Polaris submarines, we can have much more time to make a mature decision to retaliate, if we wish.

Another desirable feature of Polaris is that it will draw the enemy's bombs to sea,

What is the score on your successes and failures in tests of Polaris?

Well, tests to technical men mean tests of the whole system. We have conducted a very large number of tests in each of the major areas that contribute to the system as a whole and to date we have been extremely successful, and we are on schedule.

At one time there was speculation that Polaris would be used as a land-based solid propellant missile. Then the Air Force was ordered to develop the intercontinental-range ballistic missile Minuteman. Is the difference in capability of these two solid propellant missiles mainly one of range?

Principally. A submarine can carry a missile 3,000 or 4,000 miles closer to the enemy. It is therefore more efficient for the Navy to build a shorter-range missile.

It has been reported that the first Polaris missiles will have a relatively short range, and this will be upped later to 1,600 and ultimately 3,000. Is that correct?

The first missile we put in operation in 1960 will be as good a missile as we can possibly build. No one can say definitely what we will have. We know our technical goals, and it is going to be a very usable and useful weapon in a submarine where, if you don't have quite the range you want, you just walk the submarine in a little closer.

Your goal is 1,500?

The Polaris is thought of as an inter-



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brighten up the house. But large bunches of blooms to of color I couldn't resist picking the plants turned into masses even know the names of. When dogwood, and others I don't Feonies, lris, daffodils, roses, had flowers—scads of them, quiet. In Pennsylvania we had even a passable American bou- ago I couldn't have presented bered that just about a year bad, though, when I remem- Defeating, wasn't it? Not so arrangement." you how to make a Japanese arrangement. Now I'll show "That's a very good American said (through our interpreter), turned to me with a smile and it. He studied it awhile, then when he came around to inspect what our teacher would say waited a little smugly to hear the class about six months. I had been attending fairly passable arrangement. At I did what I thought was a

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